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Field Testing Underway of Remote Sensor Gas Leak Detection Systems

Casper, WY— An extensive field test that will document and demonstrate how effective technologies are in remotely detecting natural gas leaks is being held September 13-17, as the Department of Energy simulates natural gas leaks along a predetermined course at DOE's Rocky Mountain Oilfield Testing Center (RMOTC).

Low-flying aircraft, satellites and special ground vehicles carrying advanced leak detection sensors will participate as representatives of the gas industry and potential technology manufacturers observe the technologies in a real-world environment and evaluate their readiness for commercialization. The test plan was devised with strong input from an industry advisory board and test participants to compare the effectiveness of several gas-leak detection devices from ground, air and satellite based platforms.

DOE and its National Energy Technology Laboratory have funded these technologies through varying stages of development. In addition the US Department of Transportation's Office of Pipeline Safety is funding one technology participating in the event. If effective, the technologies could serve to effectively and efficiently monitor large sections of the Nation's 1.3 million miles of transmission and distribution pipelines which crisscross the United States.

The tests will involve the release of natural gas leaks of varying sizes above and below ground along a nine-mile stretch of simulated pipeline. At least one leak will occur over an extended interval to allow potential geobotanical effects to be monitored.

Six sensor technologies with different applications are scheduled to participate. The devices use several unique methods of remotely detecting and quantifying the presence of natural gas without physically passing through the leak.

The demonstrations with RMOTC serving as host and providing support services, will be coordinated by Southwest Research Institute, an independent research organization with extensive experience in planning and executing detailed testing of new natural gas technologies, and representatives of the natural gas industry are participating as test plan development advisors and demonstration observers.

NETL staff will be on hand during testing in Casper to record the activities, images and videos to be used on

the lab's website and in future articles and presentations.

Initial testing results are expected within a few weeks of the event with a final report detailing results to be released before the end of the year.

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For more information, contact:

- David Anna, DOE National Energy Technology Laboratory, 412-386-4646, david.anna@netl.doe.gov